

FIELD WORK.

The Dawn of Universal Righteousness Begins to Break.

And the Churches Everywhere Are Doing Good Service for the Cause of Christ—Sermon by Dr. Talmage

BROOKLYN, N. Y., Feb. 1.—The subject of Dr. Talmage's sermon was "Unoccupied Fields," and the text from Romans, chapter 15, verse 20: "Lest I should build upon another man's foundation." Dr. Talmage said: "Stirring reports come from all parts of America showing what a great work the Churches of God are doing, and I congratulate them and their pastors. Misapprehensions have been going the rounds, saying that the outside benevolences of this particular church are neglected, when the fact is that large sums of money are being raised in various ways by this church for all styles of good objects, not always through the boards of our own denomination. This church was built by all denominations of Christians, and by many sections of this land and other lands, and that obligation has led us to raise money for many objects not connected with our denomination, and this accounts for the fact that we have not regularly contributed to all the boards commended. But I rejoice in that you have done, as a church, a magnificent work, and am grateful that we have received during the year by the confession of faith in Christ 725 souls, which fact I mention not in boasting but in defense of this church, showing it has been neither idle nor inefficient. The most of our accessions have been from the outside world, so that, taking the idea of my text, we have not been building on other people's foundations.

In laying out the plan of his missionary tour Paul sought out towns and cities which had not yet been preached to. He goes to Corinth, a city mentioned for splendor and vice, and Jerusalem, where the priesthood and the Sannedites were ready to leap with both feet upon the Christian religion. He feels he has especial work to do, and he means to do it. What was the result? The grandest life of usefulness that a man ever lived. We modern Christian workers are not apt to imitate Paul.

We build on other people's foundations. If we erect a church we prefer to have it filled with families all of whom have been pious. Do we gather a Sabbath-school class, we want good boys and girls, hair combed, faces washed, manners attractive. So a church in this day is apt to be built out of other churches. Some ministers spend all their time in fishing in other people's ponds, and they throw in the line into that church pond and jerk out a Methodist, and throw the line into another church pond and bring out a Presbyterian; or there is a religious row in some neighboring church, and a whole school of fish swim off from that pond, and we take them all in with one sweep of the net. What is gained? Absolutely nothing for the general cause of Christ. It is only as in an army, when a regiment is transferred from one division to another—from the Tennessee to the Potomac.

What strengthens the army is new recruits. What I have always desired is that while we are courteous to those coming from other flocks, we build our church not out of other churches, but out of the world, lest we build on another man's foundation. The fact is, this is a big world. When in our schoolboy days we learned the diameter and circumference of this planet, we did not learn half. It is the latitude and longitude and diameter and circumference of want and woe and sin that no figures can calculate.

This one spiritual continent of wretchedness reaches across all zones, and if I were called to give its geographical boundary I would say it is bounded on the north and south and east and west by the great heart of God's sympathy and love. Oh, it is a great world! Since six o'clock this morning 60,800 persons have been born, and all these multiplied people are to be reached of the gospel. In England or in our Eastern American cities we are being much crowded, and an acre of ground is of great value, but out West five hundred acres is a small farm, and twenty thousand acres is no unusual possession. There is a vast field here and everywhere unoccupied, plenty of room more, not building on another man's foundation.

We need as churches to stop bombarding the old ironclad sinners that have been proof against thirty years of Christian assault. Alas for that church which lacks the spirit of evangelism, spending on one chandelier enough to light five hundred souls to glory, and in one carved pillar enough to have made a thousand men "pillars in the house of our God forever," and doing less good than many a log-cabin meeting-house with tallow candles stuck in wooden sockets and a minister who has never seen a college or known the difference between Greek and Choctaw. We need, as churches, to get into sympathy with the great outside world and let them know that none are so broken-hearted or hardly beset that will not be welcomed. "No!" says some fastidious Christian, "I don't like to be crowded in church. Don't put any one in my pew." My brother, what will you do in Heaven? When a great multitude that no man can number assembles they will put fifty in your pew. What are the select few to-day assembled in the Christian churches compared with the mighty millions outside of them, eight hundred thousand in Brooklyn, but less than one hundred thousand in the churches. Many of the churches are like a hospital that should advertise that its patients have nothing worse than toothache or "run-rounds," but no broken heads, no crushed ankles, no fractured thighs. Give us for treatment moderate sinners, velvet-coated sinners and sinners with a gloss on. It is as though a man had a farm of three thousand acres and put all his work on one acre. He may raise never so large ears of corn, never so big heads of wheat, he would remain poor.

The church of God has bestowed its chief care on one acre, and has raised splendid ears and women in that small inclosure, but the field is the world. That means North and South America, Europe, Asia, Africa and all the islands of the sea. It is as though after a great battle there were left fifty thousand wounded and dying on the field, and three surgeons gave all their time to three patients under their charge. The Major-General comes in and says to the doctors: "Come out here and look at the nearly fifty thousand dying for lack of surgical attendance." "No," say the three doctors, standing there fanning their patients, "we have three important cases here, and we are attending to them, and when we are not positively busy with their wounds, it takes all our time to keep the flies off." In this awful battle of sin and sorrow where millions have fallen on millions, do not let us spend all our time in taking care of a few people, and when the command comes "Go into the world" say practically "No, I can't go; I have here a few choice cases, and I am busy keeping off the flies." There are multitudes to-day who have never had any Christian worker look them in the eye and with earnestness in the accentuation say, "Come!" or they would long ago have been in the Kingdom. My friend, religion is either a sham or a tremendous reality. If it be a sham let us disband our churches and Christian associations. If it be a reality, then great populations are on the way to the bar of God unfitted for the ordeal, and what are we doing?

In order to reach the multitude of outsiders we must drop all technicalities out of our religion. When we talk to people about the hypostatic union and French encyclopedism and Erastianism and Bompianism, we are as impolite and little understood as a physician should talk to an ordinary patient about the pericardium and intercostal muscle, and scorbutic symptoms. Many of us come out of the theological seminaries so loaded up that we take the first ten years to show our people how much we know, and then the next ten years get our people to know as much as we know, and at the end find that neither of us know anything as we ought to know. Here are hundreds and thousands of sinners, struggling and dying people who need to realize just one thing—that Jesus Christ came to save them, and will save them now. But we go into a profound and elaborate definition of what justification is, and after all the work there are not, outside of the learned professions, five thousand people in the United States who can tell what justification is. I will read you the definition:

"Justification is purely a forensic act—the act of a Judge sitting in a Forum—in which the Supreme Ruler and Judge, who is accountable to none and who alone knows the manner in which the ends of His universal government can best be attained, reckons that which was done by the substitute in the same manner as if it had been done by those who believe in the substitute, and not on account of anything done by them, but purely upon account of this gracious method of reckoning, grants them full remission of their sins."

Now, what is justification? I will tell you what justification is. When a sinner believes, God lets him off. One summer in Connecticut I went to a large factory, and I saw over the door written the words, "No admittance." I entered and saw over the next door, "No admittance." Of course, I entered. I got inside and found it a pin factory, and they were making pins—very serviceable, fine and useful pins. So the spirit of exclusiveness has practically written over the outside door of many a church: "No admittance." And if the stranger enters he finds practically written over the second door: "No admittance," while the minister stands in the pulpit, hammering out his little niceties of belief, pounding out the technicalities of religion—making pins. In the most practical, common-sense way, and laying aside the non-essentials and the hard definitions of religion, go out on the God-given mission, telling people what they need and when and how they can get it.

Comparatively little effort as yet has been made to save that large class of persons in our midst called skeptics, and he who goes to work here will not be building upon another man's foundation. There is a great multitude of them. They are afraid of us and our churches, for the reason we don't know how to treat them. One of this class met Christ, and hear with what tenderness, and pathos, and beauty, and success Christ dealt with him: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment, and the second is like to this, namely: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is no commandment greater than this." And the Scribe said to him: "Well, Master, thou hast said the truth, for there is one God, and to love Him with all the heart, and all the understanding, and all the soul, and all the strength is more than whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, He said unto him: "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God." So a skeptic was saved in one interview. But few Christian people treat the skeptic in that way. Instead of taking hold of him with the gentle hand of love, we are apt to take him with the iron pinners of ecclesiasticism.

You would not be so rough, on that man if you knew by what process he had lost his faith in Christianity. I have known men skeptical from the fact that they grew up in houses where religion was overdone. Sunday was the most awful day of the week. They had religion driven into them with a trip-hammer. They were surfeited with prayer-meetings. They were stuffed and choked with catechisms. They were often told they were the worst boys the parents ever knew, because they liked to ride down hill better than to read Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." Whenever father and mother talked of religion they drew down the corners of their mouth and rolled up their

eyes. If any one thing will send a boy or girl to perdition sooner than another that is it. If I had had such a father and mother I fear I should have been a laddie.

Others were tripped up of skepticism from being grievously wronged by some man who professed to be a Christian. They had a partner in business who turned out to be a first-class scoundrel, though a professed Christian. Twenty years ago they lost all faith by what happened in an oil company which was formed amid the petroleum excitement. The company owned no land, or, if they did, there was no sign of oil produced; but the president was a Presbyterian elder, and the treasurer was an Episcopal vestryman, and one director was a Methodist class-leader, and the other directors prominent members of Baptist and Congregational churches, circulars were gotten out telling what fabulous prospects opened before this company. Innocent men and women who had a little money to invest, and that little their all, said: "I don't know any thing about this company, but so many good men are at the head of it that it must be excellent, and taking stock in it must be almost as good as joining the church." So they bought the stock, and perhaps received one dividend so as to keep them still, but after a while they found that the company had reorganized, and had a different president, and a different treasurer, and different directors. Other engagements or ill-health had caused the former officers of the company, with many regrets, to resign. And all that the subscribers of that stock had to show for their investment was a beautifully ornamented certificate.

Sometimes that man, looking over his old papers, comes across that certificate, and it is so suggestive that he vows he wants none of the religion that the presidents and trustees and directors of that oil company professed. Of course their rejection of religion on such grounds was unsophisticated and unwise. I am told that one-third of the United States army desert every year, and there are twelve thousand court-martial trials every year. Is that any thing against the United States Government that swore them in? And if soldiers of Jesus Christ desert, is that any thing against the Christianity which they swore to support and defend? How do you judge of the currency of a country? By a counterfeit bill? Oh, you must have patience with those who have been swindled by religious pretenders. Live in the presence of others a frank, honest, earnest Christian life, that they may be attracted to the same Saviour upon whom your hopes depend.

Remember skepticism always has some reason, good or bad, for existing. Goeth's irreligion started when the news came to Germany of the earthquake at Lisbon, November 1, 1755. That sixty thousand people should have perished in that earthquake and in the after rising of the Tagus river so stirred his sympathies that he threw up his belief in the goodness of God.

Others have gone into skepticism from a natural persistence in asking the reason why. They have been fearfully stabbed of the interrogation point. There are so many things they can not get explained. They can not understand the Trinity, or how God can be Sovereign and yet man a free agent. Neither can I. They say: "I don't understand why a good God should have let sin come into the world." Neither do I. You say: "Why was that child started in life with such disadvantages, while others have all physical and mental equipment?" I can not tell. They go out of church on Easter morning and say:

"That doctrine of resurrection confounded me." So it is to me a mystery beyond unravelment. I understand all the processes by which men get into the dark. I know them all. I have traveled with burning feet that blistered way. The first word that children learn to utter is generally papa or mamma. I think the first word I ever uttered was "Why?" I know what it is to have a hundred midnight pour their darkness into one hour. Such men are not to be scoffed at, but helped. Turn your back upon a drowning man when you have the rope with which to pull him ashore, and let that woman in the third story of a house perish in the flames when you have a ladder with which to help her out and help her down, rather than turn your back scoffingly on a skeptic whose soul lies in more peril than the bodies of those other endangered ones possibly can be. Oh, skepticism is a dark land! There are men in this house who would give a thousand worlds, if they possessed them, to get back to the placid faith of their fathers and mothers, and it is our place to help them, and we may help them, never through their heads, but always through their hearts. These skeptics when brought to Jesus will be mightily affected—far more so than those who never examined the evidences of Christianity. Thomas Chalmers was once a skeptic, Robert Hall a skeptic, Robert Newton a skeptic, Christmas Evans a skeptic. But when once with strong hand they took hold of the chariot of the Gospel they rolled it on with what momentum! If I addressed such men and women to-day, I throw out no scoff. I plead them by the memory of the good old days when at their mother's knee they said: "Now I lay me down to sleep," and by those days and nights of scarlet fever in which she watched you, giving you the medicine at just the right time and turning your pillow when it was hot, and with hands that many years ago turned to dust, soothed away your pain, and with voice that you will never hear again, unless you join her in the better country, told you to never mind for you would feel better by and by, and by that dying cough where she looked so pale and talked so slowly, catching her breath between the words, and you felt an awful loneliness coming over your soul; by all that, I beg you to come back and take the same religion. It was good enough for her. It is good enough for you. Nay, I have a better plea than that. I plead by all the wounds, and tears, and blood, and groans, and agonies, and death-throes of the Son of

God, who approaches you this moment with torn brow, and lacerated hand, and whipped back, and saying: "Come unto me, all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Again, there is a field of usefulness but little touched occupied by those who are astray in their habits. All northern nations, like those of North America and England and Scotland, that is, in the colder climates, are devastated by alcoholism. They take the fire to keep up the warmth. In southern countries, like Arabia and Spain, the blood is so they are not tempted to fiery liquors. The great Roman armies never drank any thing stronger than water tinged with vinegar, but under our northern climate the temptation to heating stimulants is most mighty, and millions succumb. When a man's habits go wrong the church drops him, the social circle drops him, good influences drop him, we all drop him. Of all the men who get off track but few ever get on again. Near my summer residence there is a life-saving station on the beach. There are all the ropes and rock-ets, the boats, the machinery for getting people off shipwrecks. Summer before last I saw there fifteen or twenty men who were breakfasting after having just escaped with their lives and nothing more. Up and down our coast are built these useful structures, and the mariners know it, and they feel that if they are driven into the breakers there will be apt from shore to come a rescue. The Churches of God ought to be so many life-saving stations, not so much to help those who are in smooth waters but those who have been shipwrecked. Come, let us run out the life-boats! And who will man them? We do not preach enough to such men; we have not enough faith in their release. Alas, if when they come to hear us, we are laboriously trying to show the difference between Sublapsarianism and Supralapsarianism, while they have a thousand vipers of remorse and despair coiling around and biting their immortal spirits. The church is not chiefly for goodish sort of men whose proclivities are all right, and who could get to Heaven praying and singing in their own homes. It is on the beach to help the drowning. Those bad cases are the cases that God likes to take hold of. He can save a big sinner as well as a small sinner; and when a man calls earnestly to God for help he will go out to deliver such a one. If it were necessary God would come down from the sky, followed by all the artillery of Heaven and a million angels with drawn swords. Get one hundred such redeemed men in each of your churches and nothing could stand before them, for such men are generally warm-hearted and enthusiastic. No formal prayers then. No heartless singing then. No cold conventionalisms then.

Furthermore, the destitute children of the street offer a field of work comparatively unoccupied.

The uncare for children are in the majority in Brooklyn and most of our cities. When they grow up, if unreformed, they will outvote your children, and they will govern your children. The whisky ring will hatch out other whisky rings, and grog-shops will kill with their horrid stench public sobriety unless the church of God rises up with outstretched arms and enfolds this dying population in her bosom. Public schools can not do it. Art galleries can not do it. Blackwell's Island can not do it. Alms-houses can not do it. New York Tombs and Raymond-street Jail can not do it. Sing Sing can not do it. Church of God wake up to your magnificent mission! You can do it. Get somewhere, somehow to work.

DIET AND CONDUCT.

The Influence of Food Upon the Disposition of the Consumer.

Sir Henry Thompson thinks that our forefathers did not sufficiently consider this great subject. Like Mr. Spencers, they have been, he admits, very particular of our morals. He sees a wise and lofty purpose in the laws they have framed for the regulation of human conduct, and the satisfaction of the natural cravings of religious emotions. But these other cravings equally common to human nature, those grosser emotions, cravings of the physical body, they have disregarded. "No doubt," he says, "there has long been some practical acknowledgement on the part of a few educated persons of the simple fact that a man's temper, and consequently most of his actions, depend upon such an alternative as whether he habitually digests well or ill; whether the meals which he eats are properly converted into healthy material, suitable for the ceaseless work of building up both muscle and brain; or whether unhealthy products constantly pollute the course of nutritive supply. But the truth of that fact has never been generally admitted to an extent at all comparable with its exceeding importance." Herein were our ancestors unwise. The relation between food and virtue, Sir Henry maintains (as did Pythagoras before him), to be a very close relation. His view of this relationship is not the view of Pythagoras, who, as Malvolto knew, bade man not to kill so much as a woodcock, lest haply he might dispossess the soul of his grandam. Plutarch also was averse to a too solid diet, for the reason that it does "very much oppress" those who indulge therein, and is apt to leave behind "malignant relics." Sir Henry, in his turn, would not have men to be great eaters of beef, though he holds with Plutarch rather than with Pythagoras, being (so far as I can judge) no believer in the doctrine of metempsychosis. But of the influence man's diet has on his conduct no less than his constitution he is very sure: "It is certain that an adequate practical recognition of the value of proper food to the individual in maintaining a high standard of health, in prolonging healthy life (the prolongation of healthy life being small gain either to the individual or to the community), and thus largely promoting cheerful temper, prevalent good-nature and improved moral tone, would achieve almost a revolution in the habits of a large part of the community."—*Christian at Work.*

The talent of success is nothing more than doing what you can do well without a thought of fame.—*Longfellow.*

Perish discretion when it interferes with duty.—*Danah More.*

PERSONAL AND LITERARY.

—Jennie June owns half of *Goody's Lady's Book.*

—Carl Schurz is said to be permanently crippled by the result of the fall on the ice last winter, that was at first believed to have caused only a sprain.

—Mrs. Bonanza Mackay indignantly denies that she is to have a cloak made of birds of paradise breasts. She says, on the contrary, she does not approve of slaughtering birds for ornament or trimming.

—The *University Tinker and Amateur's Assistant* is a new monthly devoted to amateur pursuits, and tells, from an amateur's standpoint, about turning and lathe work, painting, staining, etc.

—Max O'Rell's real name is Paul Blouet. He wears a single eyeglass and is a typical Frenchman, thirty-nine years old, a brunette, with bright, sparkling eyes and a lively, engaging manner. He judges England by a French standard; but although not blind to her faults, he is very kind to her virtues, and says, with Voltaire, "If I could have chosen my birthplace, I would have chosen England."

—Mrs. General Grant, the New York *World* says, has been quietly making arrangements to dispose of her house on Sixty-sixth street. It is a valuable property, but she wishes to have its value in some form where she can divide it among her sons and give them the benefit of it. One of her projects in this direction was to exchange the property for three less valuable ones, which her sons might occupy.

—An interesting literary novelty is promised in Texas. Mr. James B. Goode of Paris, in that State, has made arrangements to publish all his poems in a volume of more than a thousand pages, with many illustrations. It is called "Gems of Thought," and will contain over forty thousand verses of poetry on about one thousand subjects, with a great number of humorous prose articles on his life, thoughts, travels, and adventures as a reporter, a detective and a gentleman of leisure. Brother Goode has evidently discharged a great variety of functions in life, and has thought out an enormous lot of golden gems.

—General William F. Bartlett was among the captured at Petersburg. Earlier in the war he had lost a leg, which he replaced with a patent cork leg. While he was standing in the crater a shot was heard to strike with the peculiar thud known to those who have been in action and the general was seen to totter and fall. A number of officers and men immediately lifted him, when he cried out, "Put me any place where I can sit down." "But you are wounded, general aren't you?" was the inquiry. "My leg is shattered all to pieces," said he. "Then you can't sit up," they urged, "you'll have to lie down." "Oh, no!" exclaimed the general, "it's only my cork leg that's shattered!"—*Argonaut.*

HUMOROUS.

—From a French album: "Woman is a much tenderer creature than a man.—A Cannibal."—*Boston Transcript.*

—Don't judge a man's character by the deference shown him. No one ever saw a chimney sweep crowded off the sidewalk.—*Binghamton Republican.*

—Miss Blinks—"Why do you marry Tom Bloodgood? He is well on in years." Miss Jenks—"Yes, but he is also well off in money."—*Burlington Free Press.*

—A poet sent to an editor a contribution entitled: "Why do I live?" The editor answered: "Because you sent your contributions by mail instead of bringing them in person."—*Northern Eagle.*

—Before you call attention to the fact that a pig has no use for his tail, please remember that you have two buttons on the lower back of your coat that don't button any thing.—*Burlington Hawkeye.*

—Doctor, can you tell me what will prevent my food from hurting me?" "Nothing easier. Don't eat it." "Ha! ha! very good joke." "Not at all. Three dollars, please. If you have any further trouble, come again, and we'll try some other course."—*Boston Transcript.*

—A dignified Eastern gentleman traveling in California was besieged by a newsboy on the train to buy some of his papers. After being repeatedly refused, the boy gazed on him for a moment and said, blandly: "I've got some picture papers for them as can't read."—*Elmira Advertiser.*

—"George, dear," said the girl, "do you ever drink any thing?" "Yes, occasionally," George reluctantly admitted. "But, dear," she went on anxiously, "what do you suppose papa would say if he should discover that the future husband of his only daughter drank?" "He discovered it this morning." "O, George, and what did he say?" "He said: 'Well, George, my boy, I don't care if I do.'"—*N. Y. Sun.*